

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS****Listing of Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

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1-25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method of acquiring and playing digital content comprising:  
acquiring a physical [electronic] key containing a key code from a key provider;  
requesting digital content from a content provider;  
after locking the digital content with an unlock code associated with the key code  
contained in the physical [electronic] key, receiving the locked digital content;  
and  
entering the locked digital content into a playing device that reads the key code and  
determines whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the device  
being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated  
with the unlock code, the physical key being a physical object adapted to be  
carried by a user apart from the playing device.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the step of acquiring the physical [electronic] key includes providing the key provider with user identification information for use by the key provider in establishing a user account, the user account including the user identification information and the key code.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, further including providing the content provider with the key code for use by the content provider in validating the key code prior to providing the locked digital content.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the locked digital content is locked by encryption and unlocked by decryption.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the step of acquiring the physical [electronic] key includes accessing a first web site of the key provider and requesting the physical [electronic] key via the first web site, and wherein the step of requesting the digital content includes accessing a second web site of the content provider and requesting the digital content via the second web site.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the physical [electronic] key is acquired at no charge, and wherein the digital content is purchased.

32. (Currently Amended) A method of managing digital rights comprising:  
providing a physical [electronic] key containing a key code to a requesting user;  
locking digital content with an unlock code associated with the key code contained in the physical [electronic] key;  
after locking the digital content, providing the locked digital content to the requesting user;  
receiving the locked digital content in a playing device that reads the key code and determines whether the key code is associated with the unlock code; and  
enabling the playing device to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code, the physical key being a physical object adapted to be carried by the user apart from the playing device.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 32, further including establishing a user account including user identification information and the key code for the requesting user prior to the step of providing the physical [electronic] key.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, further including obtaining and validating the key code for the requesting user prior to the step of providing the locked digital content.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 32, further including administering a first web site for receiving a request for the physical [electronic] key from the requesting user, and administering a second web site for receiving a request for the digital content from the requesting user.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the locked digital content is locked by encryption and unlocked by decryption.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 32, wherein the physical [electronic] key and the playing device include respective wireless transceivers for communicating the key code from the key to the playing device.

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38. (Currently Amended) A digital rights management system, comprising:  
a physical [electronic] key containing a key code and provided to a requesting user;  
means for locking digital content with an unlock code associated with the key code contained in the physical [electronic] key;  
means for providing the locked digital content to the requesting user; and  
a playing device for receiving the locked digital content, receiving the key code, and determining whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the playing device being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code, the physical key being a physical object adapted to be carried by the user apart from the playing device.

39. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 38, wherein the physical [electronic] key and the playing device include means for communicating the key code to the playing device.

40. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 38, wherein the means for providing the locked digital content to the requesting user includes a web site on the Internet.

41. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, wherein the means for providing the locked digital content secures validation of the key code prior to providing the locked digital content.

42. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 38, further including means for providing the physical [electronic] key, and establishing a user account including user identification information and the key code for the requesting user prior to providing the key.

43. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 42, wherein the means for providing the physical [electronic] key includes a web site on the Internet.

44. (Currently Amended) A digital rights management system, comprising:  
a physical [electronic] key containing a key code;  
digital content locked, at a time of acquisition of the digital content by a requesting user,  
with an unlock code associated with the key code contained in the physical  
[electronic] key; and  
a playing device for receiving the locked digital content, receiving the key code, and  
determining whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the playing  
device being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is  
associated with the unlock code, the physical key being a physical object adapted  
to be carried by the user apart from the playing device.

45. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the digital content is locked by encryption and unlocked by decryption.

46. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 44, wherein the physical [electronic] key and the playing device include means for communicating the key code to the playing device.

47. (New) A physical key for use in a digital rights management system, wherein at a time of acquisition of digital content by a requesting user the system locks the digital content with an unlock code associated with a key code contained in the physical key, wherein a playing device of the system is adapted to receive the locked digital content, receive the key code, and determine whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the playing device being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code, the physical key comprising:

B1 a physical object containing the key code and being transportable by the user apart from the playing device of the system;

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